

Health and Human Services, shall, subject to subparagraph (C), carry out a program—

“(i) through the holder of the loan, to assume the obligation to repay a qualified loan amount for a loan made under section 428 or 428H of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078, 1078-8); and

“(ii) to cancel a qualified loan amount for a Federal Direct Stafford Loan or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan made under part D of title IV of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq.).

“(C) TREATMENT OF CONSOLIDATION LOANS.—A loan amount for a loan made under section 428C or section 455(g) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1078-3, 1087e(g)) may be a qualified loan amount for the purposes of subparagraph (B) only to the extent that such loan amount was used to repay a loan made under section 428 or 428H, a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan for a borrower who meets the requirements of subparagraph (A), as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

“(3) QUALIFIED LOAN AMOUNT.—After the beginning of the qualifying employment described in paragraph (2)(A)(I) and upon approval of a borrower's application under paragraph (5), the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall forgive under this subsection not more than \$10,000 of the student loan obligation of a borrower that is outstanding at the beginning of such employment.

“(4) AWARD BASIS.—Loan forgiveness under this subsection shall be on a first-come, first-served basis and subject to the availability of appropriations.

“(5) APPLICATION FOR FORGIVENESS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Each borrower desiring loan forgiveness under this subsection shall submit a complete and accurate application to the Secretary of Education at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, may require.

“(B) SERVICE AGREEMENT.—Each such application shall contain an agreement by the borrower—

“(i) to complete the commitment described in paragraph (2)(A)(I) within 6 years after receiving loan forgiveness under this subsection; or

“(ii) to repay the portion required by the regulations under paragraph (6)(A) if the borrower does not complete such commitment.

“(6) REPAYMENT FOR FAILURE TO COMPLETE SERVICE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In the event that any recipient of loan forgiveness under this subsection fails or refuses to complete a portion of the recipient's service obligation under the agreement required by paragraph (5)(B), the same portion of the amounts of loans forgiven under this subsection for such recipient shall be subject to repayment in accordance with terms and conditions, and in the amounts, specified by the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in regulations under this subsection.

“(B) FORGIVENESS IF DECEASED OR DISABLED.—Such regulations shall provide that, subject to the availability of appropriations, an individual shall be excused from repayment of any amount required under paragraph (1) if the individual dies or becomes permanently and totally disabled (as determined in accordance with such regulations).

“(7) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, is authorized to issue such regulations as may be necessary

to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

“(8) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize any refunding of any repayment of a loan.

“(9) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

“(10) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) HEAD START TEACHER.—The term ‘Head Start teacher’ means an individual who—

“(i) is employed by a Head Start agency or an entity that carries out an Early Head Start program, to provide for the education and care of children who have not reached the age of compulsory school attendance who are enrolled in a Head Start program or an Early Head Start program receiving funds under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et. seq.); and

“(ii) who has, at a minimum, an associate's degree in early childhood education or a related field.

“(B) PROGRAM YEAR.—The term ‘program year’, where applied to service as a Head Start teacher or an Early Head Start teacher, means a program year as defined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.”.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak in support of this amendment, to encourage more individuals to become Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, and to provide a way for existing Head Start teachers to improve their skills and education.

This amendment is just building upon the efforts of someone that I have grown to very much respect, Congressman TIERNEY, who has been working on this issue for years.

Specifically, this amendment proposes loan forgiveness of up to \$10,000 for Head Start and Early Head Start teachers upon completion of a bachelor's degree, who will commit to working in a Head Start or Early Head Start program for at least 3 consecutive years.

Earlier this spring, I held my district's first education summit, bringing together over 300 educators, experts, and citizens. We discussed the need to provide and retain high quality Head Start teachers, who serve our country's most disadvantaged, low-income children.

Head Start teachers are so critical at the time of a child's cognitive reasoning development, and this amendment recognizes this by ensuring that more than 55,000 Head Start teachers have the means of getting their bachelor's degree by forgiving their student loan burden.

As we call for increased qualifications in the Head Start workforce in

H.R. 1429, with 50 percent Head Start teachers nationwide now to hold a bachelor's degree by 2013, we should also provide the means to help them reach this goal. This amendment offers one way of helping current Head Start teachers upgrade their qualifications, as well as to encourage future and current students to enter this important field of teaching.

The rising cost of higher education is a concern for many, and repaying student loans is often too burdensome for these teachers, particularly when one realizes that Head Start teachers' average annual salary is only approximately \$24,000 a year, forcing teachers not to go on to receive advanced degrees, or else to leave the profession in order to repay their student loans.

This amendment will help to ensure that we are able to recruit and retain a high quality workforce for our Nation's Head Start programs.

I urge all my colleagues to support this critical amendment to help our children's future.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN (Mr. KIND). The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, while I support the intent of the amendment, which I think is good and which we included in last year's bill that we passed, the higher ed reauthorization bill, that I think is a better vehicle for this particular amendment.

I would encourage the Member to withdraw it and put this in the higher ed bill when we move later this year to reauthorize that. It fits better there.

We did a study, and we found that most of the education programs don't come under the Department of Education, they come under 39 other bureaucracies throughout this town. And it would be, I think, moving to try to have things more organized. It fits better under the Higher Ed Act, and I would encourage that the gentleman put it under that. Otherwise, I would oppose this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of Congressman SESTAK's amendment which flushes out, I think, the direction that this bill is taking, which is to try and improve the quality of teachers by mandating bachelor's degrees and associate's degrees over a very short period of time.

For a lot of the teachers in the Head Start program, though, this still begs the question, which is, how do you pay for it?

Higher education costs have gone up 40 percent over the last 6 years, and unfortunately the prior Congresses took no action to raise the size of Pell Grants. And we have obviously taken